



**John
Glenn**

Marine Corps

John Glenn

Jul 18, 1921 - Dec 8, 2016

BIRTHPLACE: Cambridge, OH

SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Second Lt.

DIVISION: Marine Corps, Marine Fighter Squadron

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

**MILITARY HONORS: 2 Distinguished Flying
crossed and 10 Air medals**

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower Foundation

BIOGRAPHY

John Herschel Glenn Jr. was born on July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio, the son of John Herschel Glenn Sr. who worked for a plumbing firm, and Clara Teresa Glenn a teacher. His parents had married shortly before John Sr., a member of the American Expeditionary Force, left for the Western Front during World War I. The family moved to New Concord, Ohio, soon after his birth, and his father started his own business, the Glenn Plumbing Company. Glenn Jr. was only a toddler when he met Anna Margaret (Annie) Castor, whom he would later marry. The two would not be able to recall a time when they did not know each other. He first flew in an airplane with his father when he was eight years old. He became fascinated by flight and built model airplanes from balsa wood kits. Glenn attended New Concord Elementary School. He washed cars and sold rhubarb to earn money to buy a bicycle, after which he took a job delivering The Columbus Dispatch newspaper. He was a member of the Ohio Rangers, an organization similar to the Cub Scouts. Glenn attended New Concord High School, where he played on the varsity football team as a center and linebacker. He also made the varsity basketball and tennis teams and was involved with Hi-Y, a junior branch of the YMCA. After graduating in 1939, Glenn entered Muskingum College (now Muskingum University), where he studied chemistry, joined the Stag Club fraternity, and played on the football team. Annie majored in music with minors in secretarial studies and physical education and competed on the swimming and volleyball teams, graduating in 1942. Glenn earned a private pilot license and a physics course credit for free through the Civilian Pilot Training Program in 1941. He did not complete his senior year in residence or take a proficiency exam, both required by the school for its Bachelor of Science degree. Glenn joined the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1942. He then joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943 and flew 59 missions in the South Pacific during World War II. After advanced training at Camp Kearny, California, he was assigned to Marine Squadron VMJ-353, which flew R4D transport planes from there. The fighter squadron VMO-155 was also at Camp Kearny flying the Grumman F4F Wildcat.

Glenn approached the squadron's commander, Major J. P. Haines, who suggested that he could put in for a transfer. This was approved, and Glenn was posted to VMO-155 on July 2, 1943, two days before the squadron moved to Marine Corps Air Station El Centro in California. He was promoted to first lieutenant in October 1943, and shipped out to Hawaii in January 1944. VMO-155 became part of the garrison on Midway Atoll on February 21, then moved to the Marshall Islands in June 1944 and flew 57 combat missions in the area. He received two Distinguished Flying Crosses and ten Air Medals. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland, in 1954 and flew on test projects involving the F-8 fighter. He made the first transcontinental flight with an average supersonic speed in 1957 when he flew from California to New York in 3 hours and 23 minutes. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1959. Of the "Mercury Seven," the U.S. military pilots selected in 1959 to be the first astronauts, Glenn was the oldest. Glenn was selected for the first orbital flight, Mercury-Atlas 6, and on February 20, 1962, his space capsule, Friendship 7, was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Its orbit ranged from approximately 161 to 261 km (100 to 162 miles) in altitude. The flight went mostly according to plan, aside from a faulty thruster that forced Glenn to control Friendship 7 manually. A faulty switch onboard also relayed the inaccurate message to mission control that the heat shield had been released. He was told not to release the pack of retro-rockets on the rear of the spacecraft after they had fired. (Mission control hoped that if the heat shield had been released, the straps of the retrorocket pack would hold the shield long enough for Glenn to survive reentry.) Glenn made three orbits, landing nearly 5 hours after launch in the Atlantic Ocean near Grand Turk island in the Turks and Caicos Islands. He became a national hero. Glenn retired from the space program in 1964 to seek the Democratic nomination for a U.S. Senate seat in Ohio. However, he withdrew from the campaign to recover after an minor accident at home left him with inner ear problems. He left the Marine Corps and became the vice president for domestic corporate development of the soft drink maker Royal Crown Cola International Ltd. in 1965 and later became president of the company. In 1970 he ran for the Senate again but lost narrowly in the primary. He was elected U.S. senator from that state in 1974 and was reelected three times thereafter. Glenn was unsuccessful, however, in his bid to become the 1984 Democratic presidential candidate. Courtesy of britannica.com and wikipedia.com